

April 18, 2024
RESPONSE TO FEDERAL BUDGET 2024

The Professional Association of Canadian Theatre (PACT) and its members thank the government for the steps it has taken in Budget 2024 to bolster live theatre in Canada. With the \$31 million top up to the Canada Arts Presentation Fund (CAPF) over two years, theatres and theatre-lovers from coast-to-coast-to-coast will know that their voices have been heard and are important to Canadians and to this government.

Public funding plays a vital role in ensuring that Canadians everywhere are able to discover and access theatre in their community. Theatres act as cultural touchstones in Canada. Now, when Canadians increasingly feel less connected to each other and their community, we need theatre more than ever. We are grateful the Government of Canada understands this value by investing in CAPF in Budget 2024.

Many theatres are at a tipping point as the road to recovery for live performance has neither been easy nor linear. At time when many funding envelopes remain oversubscribed and underfunded, the sector faces a precarious future. The recommitment and investment to the CAPF fund is an important first step towards providing the runway necessary that theatre companies need to survive. CAPF exists to address the record high operating costs of presenting live performances, the continued hesitancy of audiences, the loss of a consistent donor base, and the instability of the arts workforce.

PACT is appreciative of this government's support for capital and infrastructure projects in Canadian communities, namely through the \$500 million over five years to the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings program (GICB). A lack of affordable, green, and accessible cultural spaces remains a key issue for PACT members, many of whom have had to reduce programming as a result. The GICB investment is a step in the right direction to address this deficit. PACT looks forward to working with Infrastructure Canada to ensure its members can improve access to this program to realize important cultural spaces projects.

Nevertheless, PACT remains concerned at the recent "refocusing" in funding outlined in the departmental plans, to both the Canada Council for the Arts and the Department of Canadian Heritage. These reductions impacted programs like the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund and the Canada Cultural Investment Fund, programs that theatres depend upon to enhance their physical infrastructure and fuel innovative projects essential for sectoral growth.

In the weeks and months to come, we look forward to working with the Government of Canada on implementing the investment to the Canada Arts Presentation Fund, as well as working to ensure support for programs impacted by the "refocusing" is re-examined. We aim to ensure theatres everywhere have the tools and resources necessary to play an impactful role for Canadians in their communities.

Every day, world-class theatre can be found on stages across Canada. Today, we are grateful in the knowledge that whether they be big or small, companies from to coast-to-coast-to-coast will continue to be able to find new ways to develop their audiences, tell their stories, and connect with their community.